

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

APRIL 30, 2013

Strengthening the County's Oversight of Foster Family Agencies and Group Homes for Dependent Children under the Supervision of the Department of Children and Family Services

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is the Los Angeles County department that directly oversees the safety and welfare of children who have been abused or neglected and under jurisdiction of the court. These children are referred to as "dependent" children. Dependent children are sometimes placed with foster family agencies (FFA) or group homes when they cannot remain in their families' homes or be placed with a relative.

DCFS contracts with FFAs and group homes and these contracts allow DCFS to conduct programmatic audits and the County's Auditor-Controller's Office to conduct fiscal audits to make sure that all of the rules are being followed, the children are properly cared for and receive all of the services that they need, as well as to make sure that the agencies are fiscally sound.

These audits serve an important role in making sure that these dependent

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MOTION

MOLINA _____

YAROSLAVSKY _____

KNABE _____

ANTONOVICH _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

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children receive the best care possible and that the County contracts with agencies that are fiscally sound. Based on information provided by the Auditor-Controller, there are approximately 150 such agencies. There are concerns about the audit results and its impact on services because it has been the County's experience that the lack of fiscal soundness impacts the quality of programmatic services provided to these dependent children. As such, a sampling of the fiscal and programmatic audits was conducted to identify emergent issues and areas for improvement. This review included ten FFA agencies servicing over 634 children placed within 284 certified foster homes, and eleven group homes for a total of 35 homes with a capacity of 300 children. One thing that was clear based on this review is that both the programmatic and fiscal audits must be performed timely, and there should be consistent follow-up where corrective action is warranted.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Auditor-Controller and the Chief Executive Officer, to report back in writing within 90 days with a plan that:

- a. Outlines how DCFS will perform annual programmatic audits for all of the foster family agencies and group homes which provide homes to dependent children;

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- b. States the amount of money that DCFS budgets for fiscal audits performed by the Auditor-Controller; the number of fiscal audits can be conducted annually based on this budgeted amount; whether the number of fiscal audits performed annually should be increased and why; and if so, how should the amount DCFS budgets for fiscal audits be increased;
- c. Identifies how DCFS and the Auditor-Controller might collaborate to conduct a comprehensive audit during the years in which the fiscal and programmatic audits overlap; and
- d. Clarifies the status of the existing system and efforts used to track and collect overpayments to contracting agencies.

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